Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0002] of the published application, with the following replacement paragraph:

Conventionally, there is known a method of establishing correspondence between images by searching corresponding points between an input image and a reference image when verifying the input image with a reference image ~~beforehand~~ registered beforehand. The input image may be input through an image input apparatus such as a scanner.

Please replace paragraph [0049] of the published application, with the following replacement paragraph:

The accumulation-addition processing section 14 is for recursively accumulation-adding each of similarity images in order from in the j-direction, the –j-direction, the i-direction and the –i-direction. Concretely, when accumulation-adding in the j-direction for similarity degree images of n = 1 to (N-1);

~~$Cmn(u,v) = Cmn(u,v) + \alpha MAX(C_{n-1}(p,q))$~~

$Cmn(u,v) = Cmn(u,v) + \alpha MAX(Cmn_{-1}(p,q))$

Please replace paragraph [0076] of the published application, with the following replacement paragraph:

Concretely, as shown in FIG. 18, the variations u and v are initialized to be zero (at Steps 401 and 402). Thereafter, the equation ~~C'mn(p,q) = Max[Cmn(p,q)]~~ C'mn(u,v) = Max[Cmn(p,q)] is operated (Step 403). Here, the condition of $u-1 \leq p \leq u+1$ and $v-1 \leq q \leq v+1$ is satisfied. The variable v is incremented (Step 404). If the variable v is smaller than V (Yes at Step 405), the procedure is advanced to Step 403 and calculation as above is performed. If the variation v is more than V (No at Step 405), then the variation u is incremented (Step 406). If the variation u is smaller than U (Yes at Step 406),

the procedure is advanced to Step 402 and process such as above is repeated, so that a maximum value is obtained.

Please replace paragraph [0077] of the published application, with the following replacement paragraph:

Thus, if a maximum value filter is defined through the calculation, then the variables u and v are initialized to be "0" (Steps 304 and 305). Thereafter, the following equation will be operated (Step 306):

~~$Cmn(u,v) = Cmn(u,v) + \alpha Max(C'mn_{-1}(p,q))$~~

$\underline{Cmn(u,v) = Cmn(u,v) + \alpha(C'mn_{-1}(u,v))}$